MARIJUANA AND THE BIBLE

by

The Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church

OFFERINGS OF DEVOTION

With offerings of devotion, ships from the isles will meet to pour the wealth of the nations and bring tribute to his feet. The Coptic Church believes fully the teachings of the Bible, and as such we have our daily obligations, and offer our sacrifices, made by fire unto our God with chants and Psalms and spiritual hymns, lifting up holy hands and making melody in our hearts.

Herb (marijuana) is a Godly creation from the beginning of the world. It is known as the weed of wisdom, angel's food, the tree of life and even the "Wicked Old Ganja Tree". Its purpose in creation is as a fiery sacrifice to be offered to our Redeemer during obligations. The political worldwide organizations have framed mischief on it and called it drugs. To show that it is not a dangerous drug, let me inform my readers that it is used as food for mankind, and as a medicinal cure for diverse diseases. Ganja is not for commerce; yet because of the oppression of the people, it was raised up as the only liberator of the people, and the only peacemaker among the entire generation. Ganja is the sacramental rights of every man worldwide and any law against it is only the organized conspiracy of the United Nations and the political governments who assist in maintaining this conspiracy.

The Coptic Church is not politically originated, and this was firmly expressed when we met with the political directorate of the land during the period of pre-incorporation. We support no political organization, pagan religion, or commercial institution, seeing that religion, politics, and commerce are the three unclean spirits which separate the people from their God. Because of our non-political stand, the church has received tremendous opposition from the politicians, who do not want the eyes of the people to be opened. Through its agency, the police force, the church has been severely harassed, victimized, and discriminated. Our members have passed through several acts of police brutality, our legal properties maliciously destroyed, members falsely imprisoned, divine services broken up and all these atrocities performed upon the Church, under the name of political laws and their justice.

Walter Wells -- Elder Priest of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church of Jamaica, West Indies

THE USE OF MARIJUANA IN ANCIENT TIMES

The use of marijuana is as old as the history of man and dates to the prehistoric period. Marijuana is closely connected with the history and development of some of the oldest nations on earth.

It has played a significant role in the religions and cultures of Africa, the Middle East, India, and China Richard E. Schultes, a prominent researcher in the field of psychoactive plants, said in an article he wrote entitled "Man and Marijuana":

"...that early man experimented with all plant materials that he could chew and could not have avoided discovering the properties of cannabis (marijuana), for in his quest for seeds and oil, he certainly ate the sticky tops of the plant. Upon eating hemp the euphoric, ecstatic and hallucinatory aspects may have introduced man to an other-worldly plane from which emerged religious beliefs, perhaps even the concept of deity.

The plant became accepted as a special gift of the gods, a sacred medium for communion with the spiritual world and as such it has remained in some cultures to the present."

The effects of marijuana was proof to the ancients that the spirit and power of the god(s) existed in this plant and that it was literally a messenger (angel) or actually the Flesh and Blood and/or Bread of the god(s) and was and continues to be a holy sacrament. Considered to be sacred, marijuana has been used in religious worship from before recorded history.

According to William A. Embolden in his book Ritual Use of Cannabis Sativa L, p. 235:

"Shamanistic traditions of great antiquity in Asia and the Near East has as one of their most important elements the attempt to find God without a vale of tears; that cannabis played a role in this, at least in some areas, is born out in the philology surrounding the ritualistic use of the plant. Whereas Western religious traditions generally stress sin, repentance, and mortification of the flesh, certain older non-Western religious cults seem to have employed Cannabis as a euphoriant, which allowed the participant a joyous path to the Ultimate; hence such appellations as "heavenly guide".

According to "Licit and Illicit Drugs" by the Consumer Union, page 397-398:

"Ashurbanipal lived about 650 B.C., but the cuneiform descriptions of marijuana in his library "are generally regarded as obvious copies of much older texts." Says Dr. Robert P. Walton, an American physician and authority on marijuana, "This evidence serves to project the origin of hashish back to the earliest beginnings of history."

THE USE OF MARIJUANA AS INCENSE

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica: "Pharmacological Cults"

"...the ceremonial use of incense in contemporary ritual is most likely a relic of the time when the psychoactive properties of incense brought the ancient worshipper in touch with supernatural forces."

In the temples of the ancient world, the main sacrifice was the inhalation of incense. Incense is defined as the perfume or smoke from spices and gums when burned in celebrating religious rites or as an offering to a deity. Bronze and gold incense burners were cast very early in history and their forms were often inspired by cosmological themes representing the harmonious nature of the universe.

The following piece was taken from "Licit and Illicit Drugs", page 31.

"In the Judaic world, the vapors from burnt spices and aromatic gums were considered part of the pleasurable act of worship. In proverbs (27:9) it is said that 'Ointment and perfumes rejoice the heart.' Perfumes were widely used in Egyptian worship. Stone altars have been unearthed in Babylon and Palestine, which have been used for burning incense made of aromatic wood and spices. While the casual readers today may interpret such practices as mere satisfaction of the desire for pleasant odors, this is almost certainly an error; in many or most cases, a psychoactive drug was being inhaled. In the islands of the Mediterranean 2,500 years ago and in Africa hundreds of years ago, for example leaves and flowers of a particular plant were often thrown upon bonfires and the smoke inhaled; the plant was marijuana."

(Edward Preble and Gabriel V. Laurey, Plastic Cement: The Ten Cent Hallucinogen, International Journal of the Addictions, 2 (Fall 2967): 271-272.

"The earliest civilizations of Mesopotamia brewed intoxicating beer of barley more than 5,000 years ago; is it too much to assume that even earlier cultures experienced euphoria, accidentally or deliberately, through inhalation of the resinous smoke of Cannabis?"

(Ritual Use of Cannabis Sativa L, p. 216.)

"It is said that the Assyrians used hemp (marijuana) as incense in the seventh or eighth century before Christ and called it 'Qunubu', a term apparently borrowed from an old East Iranian word 'Konaba', the same as the Scythian name 'cannabis'." (Plants of the Gods - Origin of Hallucinogenic Use by Richard E. Schultes and Albert Hoffman)

"It is recorded that the Chinese Taoist recommended the addition of cannabis to their incense burners in the 1st century as a means of achieving immortality."

(Marijuana, the First Twelve Thousand Years by Earnest Abel, page 5)

"There is a classic Greek term, cannabeizein, which means to smoke cannabis. Cannabeizein frequently took the form of inhaling vapors from an incense burner in which these resins were mixed with other resins, such as myrrh, balsam, frankincense, and perfumes." (Ritual Use of Cannabis Sativa L)

"Herodotus in the fifth century B.C. observed the Scythians throwing hemp on heated stone to create smoke and observed them inhaling this smoke. Although he does not identify them, Herodotus states that when they "have parties and sit around a fire, they throw some of it into the flames. As it burns, it smokes like incense, and the smell of it makes them drunk, just as wine does us. As more fruit is thrown on, they get more and more intoxicated until finally they jump up and start dancing and singing." (Herodotus, Histories 1.202.)

EVIDENCE INDICATING THE SEMITIC ORIGIN OF CANNABIS

The name cannabis is generally thought to be of Scythian origin. Sula Benet in Cannabis and Culture argues that it has a much earlier origin in Semitic languages like Hebrew, occurring several times in the Old Testament. He states that in Exodus 30:23 that God commands Moses to make a holy anointing oil of myrrh, sweet cinnamon, kaneh bosm, and kassia. He continues that the word kaneh bosm is also rendered in the traditional Hebrew as kannabos or kannabus and that the root "kan" in this construction means "reed" or "hemp", while "bosm" means "aromatic". He states that in the earliest Greek translations of the old testament "kan" was rendered as "reed", leading to such erroneous English translations as "sweet calamus" (Exodus 30:23), sweet cane (Isaiah 43:24; Jeremiah 6:20) and "calamus" (Ezekiel 27:19; Song of Songs 4:14).

Benet argues from the linguistic evidence that cannabis was known in Old Testament times at least for its aromatic properties and that the word for it passed from the Semitic language to the Scythians, i.e. the Ashkenaz of the Old Testament. Sara Benetowa of the Institute of Anthropological Sciences in Warsaw is quoted in the Book of Grass as saying: "The astonishing resemblance between the Semitic 'kanbos' and the Scythian 'cannabis' leads me to suppose that the Scythian word was of Semitic origin. These etymological discussions run parallel to arguments drawn from history.

The Iranian Scythians were probably related to the Medes, who were neighbors of the semites and could easily have assimilated the word for hemp. The Semites could also have spread the word during their migrations through Asia Minor.

Taking into account the matriarchal element of Semitic culture, one is led to believe that Asia Minor was the original point of expansion for both the society based on the matriarchal circle and the mass use of hashish."

The Ancient Israelites were a Semitic people. Abraham, the father of the Israelite nation, came from Ur, a city of Babylonia located in mesopotamia. The Israelites migrated throughout Asia Minor and could easily have spread the religious use of marijuana.

THE ISRAELITE USE OF INCENSE

It was said that Moses, at the direction of Almighty God, first brought in the use of incense in public worship, and that the other nations of antiquity copied the practice from him. It was however a practice that began with Adam. The "Book of Jubilees", an Apocryphal book, (the Apocrypha was considered canonical by the early church and is to this day by the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church) states that "on the day when Adam went forth from the Garden of Eden, he offered as a sweet savour an offering of frankincense, galbanum, and stacte, and spices, in the morning with the rising of the sun, from the day when he covered his shame." And of Enoch we read that "he burnt the incense of the sanctuary, even sweet spices, acceptable before the Lord, on the Mount."

Incense was assigned miraculous powers by the Israelites. It was burned in golden bowls or cauldrons placed on or beside the altar. It was also burned in hand-held censers. In the Blessing of Moses, a poem belonging to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and written about 760 B.C., the sacrificial smoke is offered to the God of Israel.

Let them teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law; Let them offer sacrificial smoke to thy nostrils, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thy altar.

Throughout the Bible the ancient patriarchs were brought into communion with God through smoking incense and at Mt. Sinai God talked to Moses out of a bush that burned with fire (Exodus 3:1- 12). After Moses brought the Israelite people out of Egypt he returned to Mt. Sinai at which time God made a covenant with Moses in which the Ten Commandments were revealed. Exodus 19:8 describes the conditions at the time of this covenant.

Exodus 19:8 "And Mount Sinai was altogether on smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

The Mysterious smoke mentioned in the covenant on Mt. Sinai is also referred to as a cloud. Exodus 24:15 "And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. 16 And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

Scriptures make it abundantly clear that the clouds and the smoke are related to the burning of incense. Exodus 40:26 describes Moses burning incense, a cloud covering the tent of the congregation and the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle.

Leviticus 16:2-13 describes how God appeared in a cloud and refers to it as the clouds of incense. Numbers 16:17-19 describes how every man of the congregation had a censer full of burning incense and that the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation.

Isaiah 6:4 describes how Ezekial saw God in a smoke-filled inner court. Numbers 11:25 describes how God was revealed to Moses and the seventy elders in a cloud; that the spirit rested upon them and that they prophesied and ceased not.

The Book of Grass by Andrew and Vinkenoog includes a section on Ancient Scythia and Iran by Mircea Eliade, one of the foremost experts on the history of religions. On pages 11 and 12 is the following:

"On one document appears to indicate the existence of a Getic shamanism: It is Straho's account of the Myssian KAPNOBATAI, a name that has been translated, by analogy with Aristophanes' AEROBATES, as 'those who walk in clouds'; but it should be translated as 'those who walk in smoke'! Presumably the smoke is hemp smoke, a rudimentary means of ecstasy known to both the Tracians and the Scythians..."

This passage should be carefully noted. Biblical passages make it abundantly clear that the ancient Isrealites also walked in clouds and in smoke. In fact it was in the clouds of smoke that God was revealed to the ancient Isrealites. The words "smoke" and "smoking" appear fifty times in the King James Version of the Bible and two separate times the Bible says of the Lord, "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils." II Samuel 22:9, Psalms 18:8.

There are numerous other places in the Bible that mention the burning of incense, the mysterious cloud, and smoke. This common thread is found throughout the Bible, including the New Testament. St. Matthew 24:30 "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the Earth morn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."

Revelations 1:7 "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

Revelations 8:3 "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer: and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the Angel's hand."

Revelations 15:8 "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power."

THE SYMBOLISM OF FIRE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

The word "fire" is mentioned several hundred times in the King James version of the Bible. The sacrifice of the Lord is made by fire (Exodus 29:18, 25; Leviticus 2:10-11; Leviticus 6:13; Numbers 28:6; Deuteronomy 4:33; Joshua 13:14; I Samuel 2:28; II Chronicles 2:4; Isaiah 24:15; Matthew 3:11; Luke 1:9; Revelations 8:4-5)

Abraham, the father of the Israelite nation, came from Ur which was a city of Ancient Sumer in South Babylonia. For the Babylonians, fire was essential to sacrifice and all oblations were conveyed to the gods by the fire god Girru-Nusku, whose presence as an intermediary between the gods and man was indispensable. Girru-Nusku, as the messenger of the gods, bore the essence of the offerings upward to them in the smoke of sacrificial fire.

At Babylon: "The glorious gods smell the incense, noble food of heaven; pure wine which no hand has touched do they enjoy." (L. Jeremias, in Encyclopedia Biblica, i.v. 4119, quoting Rawlinson, Cuneif. Inscrip. IV, 19 (59).)

The most important of the ancient Indian gods was Agni, the god of fire, who like the Babylonian god Girru-Nusku acted as a messenger between men and the gods. The fire (Agni) upon the altar was regarded as a messenger, their invoker.

"...For thou, O sage, goest wisely between these two creations like a friendly messenger between two hamlets."

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the section on "mysticism":

"The Vedas (Hindu sacred writings) are hymns to the mystic fire and the inner sense of sacrifice, burning forever on the 'altar Mind'. Hence the abundance of solar and fire images: birds of fire, the fire of the sun, and the isles of fire. The symbol system of the world's religions and mysticisms are profound illuminations of the human-divine mystery. Be it the cave of the heart or the lotus of the heart, 'the dwelling place of that which is the Essence of the Universe, "the third eye", or the eye of wisdom' - the symbols all refer back to wisdom entering the aspiring soul on its way to progressive self-understanding. 'I saw the Lord with the Eye of the Heart. I said, "Who art thou?" and he answered, "Thou"'."

The ancient Indian mystics said, "...that in the ecstasy of bhang (marijuana) the spark of the Eternal in man turns into light the murkiness of matter or illusion and the self is lost in the central soul fire. Raising man out of himself and above mean individual worries, bhang makes him one with the divine force of nature and the mystery 'I am he' grew plain. (Taken from the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission Report which was written at the turn of the twentieth century.)

The concept of spiritual or inner light was found throughout the ancient world. As we shall see that spiritual light was directly related to the burning of incense. According to Lucie Lamy in "Egyptian Mysteries", page 24: "The Pharaonic word for light is akh. This word, often translated as 'transfigured', designated transcendental light as well as all aspects of physical light; and in the funerary text it denotes the state of ultimate sublimation.

"The word akh, first of all, is written with a glyph showing a crested ibis, ibis comata. This bird - the name of which was also akh -- lived in the southern part of the Arabian side of the Red Sea (near Al Qunfidhah) and migrated to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) during the winter. Both these places are near the regions from which sacred incense came, and were called the "Divine Land". The bird's crest, together with its dark green plumage shot with glittering metallic specks justifies the meanings 'to shine', 'to be resplendent', 'to irradiate'; of the root akh in the hieroglyphic writing. "Akh indeed expresses all notions of light, both literally and figuratively, from the Light which comes forth from Darkness to the transcendental light of transfiguration. It is also used to designate the 'third eye', the ureaeus, related in old tradition to the pineal body and to the spirit."

In the next chapter we will see that the sacred cloud of incense was instrumental in the transfiguration of Christ. Note that Ethiopia was referred to as the "Divine Land" and that it was the source for the sacred incense. The ancients also referred to Ethiopia as the "Land of God".

The ancient Egyptians believed that they had received their divinities from Ethiopia and have always held to the ancient and honored tradition of their southern origin. Ethiopia is so important in ancient history that it is mentioned as being in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:12).

The ancient Greek historian Diodorus Siculus wrote: "The Ethiopians conceived themselves to be of greater antiquity than any other nation; and it is probable that, born under the sun's path, its warmth may have ripened them earlier than other men. They supposed themselves to be the inventors of worship, of festivals, of solemn assemblies, of sacrifice, and every religious practice."

MARIJUANA AS THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENT

According to Jack Herer in The Emperor Wears No Clothes or Everything You Wanted to Know About Marijuana But Were Not Taught in School, "The Essenes, a kabalistic priest/prophet/healer sect of Judaism dating back to the era of the Dead Sea Scrolls, used hemp, as did the Theraputea of Egypt, from where we get the term 'therapeutic'."

The Theraputea of Egypt were Jewish ascetics that dwelt near Alexandria and described by Philo (1st century B.C.) as devoted to contemplation and meditation. Alexandria is where St. Mark is traditionally held to have established the Coptic Church in 45 A.D.

The Coptic Church has been neglected by Western scholars despite its historical significance. This has been due to the various biases and interest of the Catholic Church which claimed Christianity for its own. The result is that for the Coptic Church there is very little history. It is however assumed that the Coptic religious services have their roots in the earliest layers of Christian ritual in Jerusalem and it is known that the Coptic church is of ancient origin going back to the time of the first Christian communities and even before.

Tradition states that "Coptic" was derived from "Kuftaim", son of Mizraim, a grandchild of Noah who first settled in the Nile valley, i the neighborhood of Thebes, the ancient capital of Egypt.

At one time Thebes was the greatest city in the world and history records that by 2200 B.C. the whole of Egypt was united under a Theban prince. The splendor of Thebes was known to Homer, who called it "the city with a hundred gates". (Richard Schultes states that in ancient Thebes marijuana was made into a drink.)

According to E.A. Wallis Budge in The Divine Origin of the Herbalist, page 79, "The Copts, that is to say the Egyptians who accepted the teachings of St. Mark in the first century of our era, and embraced Christianity, seem to have eschewed medical science as taught by the physicians of the famous School of Medicine of Alexandria, and to have been content with the methods of healing employed by their ancestors."

The Essenes were an ascetic sect closely related to the Theraputea that had established a monastic order in the desert outside of Palestine and were known as spiritual healers. It has been suggested that both John the Baptist and Jesus may have been of the Essene sect as they were both heavily dependent on Essene teachings. The scripture makes no mention of the life of Jesus from the age of 13 to 30. Certain theologians speculate that Jesus was being initiated by the Essenes, the last fraternity to keep alive the ancient traditions of the prophets.

Every prophet, however great, must be initiated. His higher self must be awakened and made conscious so that his mission can be fulfilled. Amongst the Essenes' ritual lustrations preceded most liturgical rites, the most important one of which was participation in a sacred meal -- an anticipation of the Messianic banquet.

Throughout the ancient world sacrifice was a sacramental communal meal involving the idea of the god as a participant in the meal or as identical with the food consumed. The communion sacrifice was one in which the deity indwells the oblation so that the worshippers actually consume the divine. The original motive of sacrifice was an effort toward communion among the members of a group, on one hand, and between them and their god, on the other.

At its best, sacrifice was a "sacrament" and in one form or another life itself.

The central focus of the early Christian church was the Eucharist or the "body and blood" of the Lord. This was interpreted as a fellowship meal with the resurrected Christ. In meeting the Resurrected One in the Eucharist meal the Christian community had the expectation of the Kingdom of God and salvation. Christ communicated life to his disciples through the Eucharist or Christian sacrament. Christ said in describing the sacrament, "Take, eat, this is my body, this is my blood. Do this as often as you will in remembrance of me." (I Corinthians 11:24- 25)

Baptism is defined as the Christian sacrament used in purification and the spiritual rebirth of the individual. I Corinthians 10:1 makes it clear that the smoking cloud of incense was directly related to baptism. I Corinthians 10:1 "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the Cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat: for they drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

In the Biblical story of Creation, God said, "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed and to you it will be for meat." (Genesis 1:29) Marijuana is technically an herb and was considered a spiritual meat in the ancient world.

From this passage in Corinthians we see that the spiritual cloud resulting from the burning of incense was instrumental in the baptism of the Israelites. This baptism is also compared to the "eating and drinking" of the spirit of Christ. Spirit is defined as the active essence of the Deity serving as an invisible and life-giving or inspiring power in motion.

Scripture makes it abundantly clear that the sacrificial cloud or smoke contained the Spirit of God (Christ) and was instrumental in inspiring, sanctifying, and purifying the patriarchs.

In Numbers 11:25 the cloud results in the Spirit resting upon Moses and the seventy elders. This passage indicates that they prophesied ecstatically. "Prophesy" is defined as follows: to utter or announce by or as if by divine inspiration; to speak for God or a deity; to give instruction in religious matters.

Throughout the Holy Bible prophets of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. The smoking burning cloud of incense contained the spirit and was instrumental in bringing about the spiritual revelations of the prophets. In the ancient world marijuana was used to reveal the future. The virtues of marijuana include speech-giving and inspiration of mental powers. "Psychoactive" is defined as effecting the mind or behavior. When we of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church think of mind or behavior we think of that inward essence or element that makes up the individual. This is the person's spirit. We are all spiritual beings. It is just as important to keep the spiritual part of a person healthy as it is to keep the physical body healthy and in fact they are related. Hence marijuana and its relationship to spiritual food.

In the Apocrypha (Book of Jubilees), Chapter 10, God tells an angel to teach Noah the medicines which heal and protect from evil spirits. Surely God taught Noah about marijuana. In the ancient world marijuana played an important role in purification and protecting from evil influences.

Note the following concerning the transfiguration of Christ: St. Matthew 17:1 "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. 2 And he was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light. 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. 4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias. 5 When yet he spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

The Bible Dictionary by John McKenzie, page 898, says concerning the transfiguration that the cloud and the formula of the utterance of the Father are derived from the baptism of Jesus.

He says that the change described in the appearance of Jesus suggests the change which is implied in the resurrection narratives.

Some of the synonyms for transfiguration are transformation, metamorphosis, transubstantiation, and avatar. These terms imply the change that accompanies resurrection or deification. Across the world, legends of godlike men who manage to rise, in a state of perfection go back to an era before human beings had cast away from the divine source. Hence the gods were beings which once were men, and the actual race of men will in time become gods. Christ revealed this to the people of his day when he told them to whom the word of God came, "Ye are gods." (St. John 10:34)

St. Matthew 17:2 says that during the transfiguration of Christ that his face did shine as the sun. The face of Moses also shone when he returned from the cloud on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 30:34).

The shining countenances are the result of their resurrections, of their being spiritually illumined in the cloud of smoking incense. Most people are under the impression that Christ baptized with water. As you can see from the following account of John the Baptist this isn't so. John the Baptist baptized with water and Christ baptized with fire.

St. Matthew 3:11 "I indeed baptize you with water into repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

It is only logical that this baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire is related to the baptism of Christ in the burning, smoking cloud of incense and to the baptism of the patriarchs in which the patriarchs did all eat of the same spiritual meal (incense). In the section dealing with the "Holy Spirit" the Encyclopedia Britannica states that Christian writers have seen in various references to the Spirit of Yahweh in the Old Testament an anticipation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It also says that the Holy Spirit is viewed as the main agent of man's restoration to his original natural state through communion in Christ's body and, thus, as the principle of life in the Christian community. The patriarchs were recipients of a revelation coming directly from the Spirit (incense) and this was expressed in the heightening and enlargement of their consciousness. It is clear from Scripture that this spiritual dimension was also evident in the life of Jesus, in whom the experience of the Hebrew prophets was renewed.

Through the Eucharist Christ passed this spiritual dimension on to his apostles. One of the apostles even makes mention in Philippians 4:18 of a sweet smelling sacrifice that is well pleasing to God.

Christ compares this baptism to the drinking of a cup. St. Mark 10:38 "But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

This cup is referred to as the cup of salvation in Psalms 116:12.

Psalms 116:12 "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. It is called the cup of blessing in connection in connection with the eucharist.

1 Corinthians 10:16 "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood and the body of Christ? 17 For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of one bread. Here we see a connection between the cup of blessing and the communion of the blood of Christ. Blood is the life-giving substance of the living being. Christ communicated life to his disciples through the Eucharist or Christian sacrament.

In I Corinthians 10:16 we note the mention of bread as the communion of the body of Christ and that we are all partakers of one bread. This is the spiritual bread or food used by Christ and his disciples. (A synonym for the Eucharist or the Body and Blood of the Lord is the bread of life.) It is interesting to note that the finest marijuana in Jamaica is called Lamb's bread.

1 Corinthians 12:13 "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jew or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

1 Corinthians 11:25 "After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

If these passages are compared to 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, it is plain that the "eating of one bread" is the same as the patriarchs "eating the same spiritual meat" and the "drinking of one Spirit" (the cup) is the same as the patriarchs "drinking of the Spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." By making this comparison we see that the terminology of the Eucharist is directly related to the smoking cloud of incense used in the baptism of Christ and the patriarchs.

It is interesting to note that smoking was referred to as "eating" or "drinking" by the early American Indians. Peter J. Furst in Hallucinogen and Culture states the following: "Considering its enormous geographic spread in the Americas at the time of European discovery, as well as the probable age of stone tobacco pipes in California, the inhaling (often called "drinking" or "eating") of tobacco smoke by the Shaman, as a corollary to therapeutic fumigation and the feeding of the gods with smoke, must also be of considerable antiquity."

In Licit and Illicit Drugs, page 209, the following is quoted:

"Columbus and other early explorers who followed him were amazed to meet Indians who carried rolls of dried leaves that they set afire -- and who then "drank the smoke" that emerged from the rolls. Other Indians carried pipes in which they burned the same leaves, and from which they similarly "drank the smoke".

The Encyclopedia Britannica states in the section on "Sacrifice" that the interpretation of sacrifice and particularly of the Eucharist as sacrifice has varied greatly within the different Christian traditions because of the sacrificial terminology in which the Eucharist was originally described became foreign to Christian thinkers.

We of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church declare that the true understanding of the Eucharist has been passed down from generation to generation so that we are able to give an accurate interpretation of the sacrificial terminology used to describe the Eucharist. We have shown, using history and Biblical passages, that his terminology is directly related to burning smoking incense. We have shown that the "eating" or "drinking" contained in the terminology concerning the Eucharist is associated with the inhalation of smoke. We have shown that marijuana was used as incense and that it was the number one spiritual plant of the ancient world.

We of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church declare that the cup that Christ baptized his disciples with in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire was in fact a pipe or chillum in which marijuana was smoked. This is a bottomless cup and soon as it is emptied, it is filled again and passed in a circle. There is a picture of this cup or pipe below, as well as on the cover. Like the pipe of the ancient North American Indians, this cup was a portable altar. Christ was the Father of the doctrine of the Eucharist which is the communion that Jesus gave his brethren. Jesus taught that the communion is his body and blood. Jesus was not speaking of His physical body and blood. He was speaking of His spiritual body and spiritual blood that was the communion of his holy church. The supper that Jesus celebrated with his disciples "on the night that he was betrayed" (1 Corinthians 11:23) inaugurated the heavenly meal that was to be continued.

1 Corinthians 11:23 "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, which he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink of this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat of this bread, and drink of this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and let him eat of the bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of me." Here the original unity of man with God is restored. In general the reception of the Holy Spirit is connected with the actual realization, the inward experiencing of God. Marijuana has been referred to as a mild euphoric (the producer of a feeling of well-being) that produces a profound religious experience of a mystical and transcendental nature. This religious experience is said to be brought about by the stirring of deeply buried, unconscious sensitivities so that one experiences ultimate reality or the divine and confirms the feeling of the worshipper that he has been in the presence of God and has assimilated some of His powers.

To be lifted above sense to behold the beatific vision and become "incorporate" in God is the end sought in ecstasy. The priest or mystic in enthusiasm or ecstasy enjoys the beatific vision by entering into communion with God and by undergoing deification. The experience of ecstasy, states Mircea Eliade, one of the foremost authorities on religion, is a timeless primary phenomenon. Psychological experience of rapture, he continues, are fundamental to the human condition and hence known to the whole of archaic humanity. (Some of the synonyms of rapture are bliss, beatitude, transport, exaltation.)

Baudelaire, a member of the Club Des Hashichins (Hashish Club) founded in Paris around 1835 and writer of Artificial Paradises states the following about hashish: Hashish is the unadulterated resin from the flowering tops of the female hemp plant.

"One will find in hashish nothing miraculous, absolutely nothing but an exaggeration of the natural. The brain and organisms on which hashish operates will produce only the normal phenomena peculiar to that individual -- increased, admittedly, in number and force, but always faithful to the original. A man will never escape from his destined physical and moral temperament: hashish will be a mirror of his impression and private thoughts - a magnifying mirror, it is true, but only a mirror.

He cautions that the user must be in the right frame of mind to take hashish, for just as it exaggerates the natural behavior of the individual, so too does hashish intensify the user's immediate feelings. Baudelaire describes three successive phases a hashish user will pass through. He says the final stage is marked by a feeling of calmness, in which time and space have no meaning, and there is a sense that one has transcended matter. He says that in this state, one final supreme thought breaks into consciousness. "I have become God."

Realization of one's union with God is necessary in understanding the true Christian sacrament. The understanding of man's relationship to God and God's relationship to man (God in Man and Man in God) was quite prevalent in the ancient world, particularly among the religions that utilized marijuana as part of their religious practice.

Said the great Hindu sage, Manu, "He who in his own soul perceives the Supreme Soul in all beings and acquires equanimity toward them all, attains the highest bliss." To recognize oneness of self with God was contained in all the teachings of Gautama Buddha. In the Liturgy of Mithra (the Persian god of light and truth) the suppliant prays "abide with me in my soul; leave me not," and "that I may be initiated and the Holy Spirit may breathe within me." The communion became so intimate as to pass into identity: "I am thou and thou art I." Athanasius, a theologian, ecclesiastical statesman, and Egyptian national leader who was closely tied to the Coptic Church in Egypt said, "Even we may become gods walking in the flesh," and "God became man that man might become God."

Western theology (Catholic and Protestant) teaches that the spirit created matter but remained aloof of it. In Hinduism and other Eastern religions, the spirit is the inside, the matter is the outside; the two are inseparable. Eastern theologians hive rightly perceived that the God one worships must posses all the aspects of his worshippers' nature as well as his own divine nature. Otherwise, how can he create beings whose nature is entirely foreign to his own? What, then, would be the meaning of the Biblical phrase: "God made man in his own image"?

The fact that modern Christendom has no sense of union with God has led to numerous churches without the understanding for building a Christian culture and kingdom to replace the confusion of modern politics. This lack of understanding was not lacking in the ancient church and was a major source of enthusiasm for the prophets of old. In fact, the power of the early church was manifested due to this understanding of the spirit of God dwelling in man, the temple of God. To the ancient prophets it was not a God above, nor a God over yonder, but a God within. "Be still and know that I am God" -- for the visionaries and mystics of every time and place, this has been the first and greatest of the commandments.

In 1 Corinthians 11:28 Christ said, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup." Probably the most relevant study to date about what might be considered typical marijuana experience concludes that marijuana gives spontaneous insights into self (Dr. Charles Tart, "On Being Stoned: A Psychological Study of Marijuana Intoxication", Science and Behavior, 1971).

The sacramentality of marijuana is declared by Christ himself and can be understood only when a person partakes of the natural divine herb. The fact is communion of Jesus cannot be disputed or be destroyed. Marijuana is the new wine divine and cannot be compared to the old wine, which is alcohol. Jesus rejected the old wine and glorified the "new wine" at the wedding feast of Cana.

Cana is a linguistic derivation of the present day cannabis and so it is. (Some Biblical scholars -- and there is a certain amount of support in early tradition of the view -- have looked upon the miracle of Cana as a sign of the Eucharist.)

Note the references to new wine in the Bible:

Isaiah 65:8 "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servant's sake"

Acts 2:13 "Others mocking said, "These men are full of new wine."

Isaiah 65:8 declares that the new wine is found in the cluster and that a blessing is in it. When one mentions clusters, one thinks of clusters of grapes. Webster's New Riverside Dictionary, Office Edition, defines marijuana: 1. Hemp 2. The dried flower clusters and leaves of the hemp plant, esp. when taken to induce euphoria.

The Encyclopedia Britannica says the following about hemp:

Seed producing flowers form elongate, spike like clusters growing on the pistillate, or female plants; pollen producing flowers form many branched clusters or staminate, on male plants. Here and in Webster's, marijuana fits the description of the new wine and as history has shown a blessing is in it. Baudelaire said the following about the effects of hashish: "This marvelous experience often occurs as if it were the effect of superior and invisible power acting on the person from without...This delightful and singular state...gives no advance warning. It is as unexpected as a ghost, an intermittent haunting from which we must draw, if we are wise, the certainty of a better existence. This acuteness of thought, this enthusiasm of the senses and the spirit must have appeared to man through the ages as the first blessing."

In the books of Acts the apostles were accused of being full of new wine. Acts 2:13 was the time of pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles. Numerous outpourings of the Spirit are mentioned in the Acts of the apostles in which healing, prophesy, and the expelling of demons are particularly associated with the activity of the Spirit. Incense (marijuana) was used by the ancients for healing, prophesy, and the expelling of demons.

When Christ ascended into heaven in the cloud (Acts 1:9-11) he sent his disciples the Holy Spirit with the "gift of tongues" (Acts 2:3) and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as a fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and were given the power to prophesy or witness.

(Marijuana has been credited with speech giving and inspiration of mental powers.)

The first two gifts of the Holy Spirit are traditionally said to be wisdom and understanding, which no doubt are the two things most needed by the human race. In Jamaica today marijuana is referred to as the "weed of wisdom" and is reputed to be the plant that grew on Solomon's grave, a man known for his great wisdom. Marijuana expands consciousness and enhances the capacity for mystical and creative inspiration.

In Acts 2:3 Fire speaks figuratively of the Holy Spirit. Fire was also a means which to transport a saint to heaven. 2 Kings 2:11 "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

Recent writers have speculated that this passage was in reference to flying saucers. That is because they look at this passage physically. This ascension of Elijah like the ascension of Christ in the cloud into heaven is the "withdrawal" from the external or physical world, to be the inmost reality of all. This can be referred to as ecstasy, rapture, or transport and is a result of the Holy Spirit. Ecstasy, rapture, or transport therefor agree in designating a feeling or state of intense, often extreme mental and emotional exaltation. Rapture is defined as ecstatic joy or delight; joyful ecstasy. Some of the synonyms of rapture are bliss, beatitude, transport, and exultation. The true rapture is therefore one in which one is spiritually transported to the heavens. Don't expect to float up into the sky.

Marijuana as history has shown is the catalyst used to achieve the spiritual journey into the heavens. That is why in India it was referred to as the Heavenly-Guide, the Poor Man's Heaven, and the Sky-flier. That is why Professor Mircea Eliade, perhaps the foremost authority on the history of religion, suggested that Zoroaster may have caused hemp to bridge the metaphysical gap between heaven and earth.

One dictionary defines marijuana as the leaves and flowering tops when taken to induce euphoria. Euphoria is defined by the same dictionary as great happiness or bliss. (In India, marijuana has been referred to as the joy-giver and the soother of grief.)

Bliss is defined as the ecstasy of salvation, spiritual joy. Some of the synonyms of bliss are beatitude, transport, rapture, ecstasy, paradise, heaven.

Throughout the ancient world there is mention of "magical flight", "ascent to heaven", and "mystical journey". All these mythological and folklore traditions have their point of departure in an ideology and technique of ecstasy that imply "journey in spirit".

The pilgrimage from earth to heaven is not a journey to some other place or some other time, but is a journey within. One must realize that "death" through which we must pass before God can be seen does not lie ahead of us in time. Rather it is now that we have a man of sin within us that must be killed and a new man free from sin that must be born. This is actualized in baptism and the sacramental life in the church. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Galatians 3:27). The effect of baptism is spiritual regeneration or rebirth, whereby one is "enChristened", involving both union with Christ and remission of sins. In Titus 3:5 baptism is the "bath of regeneration" accompanying renewal by the Spirit. Some of the synonyms of regeneration are beatification, conversion, sanctification, salvation, inspiration, bread of life, Body and Blood of Christ. Sara Benetowa of the Institute of Anthropological Sciences in Warsaw is quoted in the Book of Grass as saying:

"By comparing the old Slavic word 'Kepati' and the Russian 'Kupati' with the Scythian 'cannabis' Shrader developed and justified Meringer's supposition that there is a link between the Scythian baths and Russian vapor baths.

"In the entire Orient even today to 'go to the bath' means not only to accomplish an act of purification and enjoy a pleasure, but also to fulfill the divine law. Vambery calls 'bath' any club in which the members play checkers, drink coffee, and smoke hashish or tobacco."

St. Matthew's account of the institution of the Eucharist attaches to the Eucharist cup these words: "Drink of it, all of, for this is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins (st. Matthew 26:27). Drinking the sacramental cup therefor serves like baptism (Acts 2:38) where Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church declare a three-part doctrine of the Holy Herb, the Holy Word, and the Holy Man (Woman).

The present and future benefits to the individual communicant have their importance given them by Jesus, who said, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." (John 6:54) As such we must see that the divine person who is active in creation, in renewal, and in human rebirth and resurrection, is also active in the Eucharist. There was a profound change in America when marijuana smoking started on a large scale in the late 1960's. A large number of people resisted the draft, resisted the war ... started letting their hair and beards grow ... became interested in natural foods... the ecology and the environment. What we really saw was the awakening of our generation to the beginning of Christian mentality through marijuana smoking. The earmarks of this mentality are: I don't want to go to war; I really don't want to be part of the political-military-economic fiasco you call society.

Like the Indians Hemp Drug Commission three quarters of a century earlier, the Canadian Le Dain Commission conducted an inquiry into the use of marijuana. On page 156 of the report is the following: "In the case of cannabis, the positive points which are claimed for it include the following: It is a relaxant; it is disinhibiting; it increases self-confidence and the feeling of creativity (whether justified by creative results or not); it increases sensual awareness and appreciation; it facilitates self acceptance and in this way makes it easier to accept others; it serves a sacramental function in promoting a sense of spiritual community among users; it is a shared pleasure; because it is illicit and the object of strong disapproval from those who are, by and large, opposed to social change, it is a symbol of protest and a means of strengthening the sense of identity among those who are strongly critical of certain aspects of our society and value structure today."

On page 144 of the Report, marijuana is associated with peace. "In our conversation with (students and young people) they have frequently contrasted marijuana and alcohol effects to describe the former as a drug of peace, a drug that reduces tendencies to aggression while suggesting that the latter drug produces hostile, aggressive behavior. Thus marijuana is seen as particularly appropriate to a generation that emphasizes peace and is, in many ways, anticompetitive."

In a magazine article by G. S. Chopra entitled "Man and Marijuana" on page 235 is a section dealing with Human Experiments. One hundred persons with an established marijuana smoking habit smoked marijuana. They described the symptoms as follows:

"I have done things today which I usually dislike but which I rather enjoyed doing today." "Nothing seemed impossible to accomplish." "I assumed a cool and composed attitude and forgot all mental worries." "I behaved in a childish and foolish manner." "It relieves sense of fatigue and gives rise to feelings of happiness." "I feel like laughing." "My head is dizzy." "I feel like taking more food." "The world is gay around me." "I feel inclined to work." "I am a friend to all and have no enemy in the world."

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, in the section on "Roman Catholicism":

"To understand the meaning and use of the Eucharist we must see it as an act of universal worship, of cooperation, of association else it loses the greater part of its significance. Neither in Roman Catholic nor in Protestant Eucharistic practice does the sacrament retain much of the symbolism of Christian unity, which clearly it has. Originally, the symbolism was that of a community meal, an accepted social symbol of community throughout the whole of human culture."

Marijuana has been used as sacrifice, a sacrament, a ritual fumigant (incense), a good-will offering, and as a means of communing with the divine spirit. It has been used to seal treaties, friendships, solemn binding agreements and to legitimize covenants. It has been used as a traditional defense against evil and in purification. It has been used in divinations (1. the art or practice that seeks to foresee or foretell future events or discover hidden knowledge; 2. unusual insight; intuitive perception.) It has been used in remembrance of the dead and praised for its medicinal properties.

Most Christians agree that participation in the Eucharist is supposed to enhance and deepen communion of believers not only with Christ but also with one another. We must therefor ask the question, "What substance did the ancients use as a community meal to facilitate communion with the Lord?" The answer to that question is marijuana. Hemp as originally used in religious ritual, temple activities, and tribal rites, involved groups of worshippers rather than the solitary individual. The pleasurable psychoactive effects were then, as now, communal experiences.

Practically every major religion and culture of the ancient world utilized marijuana as part of their religious observance. Marijuana was the ambrosia of the ancient world. It was the food, drink, and perfume of the gods. It was used by the Africans, the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Asians, the Europeans, and possibly the Indians of the Americas. Would it be too much to suggest that the ancient Israelites also utilized marijuana?

The following information was taken from the most authoritative books dealing with the history of marijuana. They are mentioned at the end of this work.

MARIJUANA IN INDIA

In Indian tradition marijuana is associated with immortality. There is a complex myth of the churning of the Ocean of Milk by the gods, their joint act of creation. They were in search of Amrita, the elixir of eternal life. When the gods, helped by demons, churned the ocean to obtain Amrita, one of the resulting nectars was cannabis. After churning the ocean, the demons attempted to gain control of Amrita (marijuana), but the gods were able to prevent this seizure, giving cannabis the name Vijaya ("victory") to commemorate their success.

Other ancient Indian names for marijuana were "sacred grass", "hero leaved", "joy", "rejoicer", "desired in the three worlds"' "gods' food", "fountain of pleasures"' and "Shiva's plant".

Early Indian legends maintained that the angel of mankind lived in the leaves of the marijuana plant. It was so sacred that it was reputed to deter evil and cleanse its user of sin. In Hindu mythology hemp is a holy plant given to man for the "welfare of mankind" and is considered to be one of the divine nectars able to give man anything from good health, to long life, to visions of the gods. Nectar is defined as the fabled drink of the gods.

Tradition maintains that when nectar or Amrita dropped from heaven, that cannabis sprouted from it. In Hindu mythology Amrita means immortality; also, the ambrosial drink which produced it.

In India hemp is made into a drink and is reputed to be the favorite drink of Indra (the King of Indian gods.) Tradition maintains that the god Indra gave marijuana to the people so that they might attain elevated states of consciousness, delight in worldly joy, and freedom from fear.

According to Hindu legends, Siva, the Supreme God of many Hindu sects, had some family squabble and went off to the fields. He sat under a hemp plant so as to be sheltered from the heat of the sun and happened to eat some of its leaves. He felt so refreshed from the hemp plant that it became his favorite food, and that is how he got his title, the Lord of Bhang. Cannabis is mentioned as a medicinal and magical plant as well as a "sacred grass" in the Atharva Veda (dated 2000 - 1400 B.C.)

It also calls hemp one of the five kingdoms of herbs...which releases us from anxiety and refers to hemp as a "source of happiness", "joy-giver" and "liberator". Although the holy books, the Shastras, forbid the worship of the plant, it has been venerated and used as a sacrifice to the deities. Indian Tradition, writing, and belief is that the "Siddhartha" (the Buddha), used and ate nothing but hemp and its seeds for six years prior to announcing (discovering) his truths and becoming the Buddha.

Cannabis held a preeminent place in the Tantric religion which evolved in Tibet in the seventh century A.D. Tantrism was a religion based on fear of demons. To combat the demonic threat to the world, the people sought protection in plants such as cannabis which were set afire to overcome evil forces.

In the tenth century A.D. hemp was extolled as indracanna, the "food of the gods". A fifteenth-century document refers to cannabis as "light-hearted", "joy-full" and "rejoices", and claimed that among its virtues are "astringency", "heat", "speech-giving", "inspiration of mental powers", "excitability" and the capacity to "remove wind and phlegm".

Today in the Tantric Buddhism of the Himalayas of Tibet, cannabis plays a very significant role in the meditative ritual to facilitate deep meditation and heighten awareness. In modern India it is taken at Hindu and Sikh temples and Mohammedan shrines. Among fakirs (Hindu ascetics) bhang is viewed as the giver of long life and a means of communion with the divine spirit. Like his Hindu brother, the Musalman fakir reveres bhang as the lengthener of life and the freer from the bonds of self.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission set up to study the use of hemp in India contains the following report:

"...It is inevitable that temperaments would be found to whom the quickening spirit of bhang is the spirit of freedom and knowledge. In the ecstasy of bhang the spark of the Eternal in man turns into the light the murkiness of matter.

"...Bhang is the Joy-giver, the Sky-filler, the Heavenly- Guide, the Poor Man's Heaven, the Soother of Grief...No god or man is as good as the religious drinker of bhang...The supporting power of bhang has brought many a Hindu family safe through the miseries of famine. To forbid or even seriously restrict the use of so gracious an herb as the hemp would cause widespread suffering and annoyance and to large bands of worshipped ascetics, deep-seated anger. It would rob the people of a solace on discomfort, of a cure in sickness, of a guardian whose gracious protection saves them from the attacks of evil influences...

MARIJUANA IN CHINA

Hemp was so highly regarded in ancient China that the Chinese called their country "the land of mulberry and hemp". Hemp was a symbol of power over evil and in emperor Shen Nung's pharmacopoeia was known as the "liberator of sin". The Chinese believed that the legendary Shen Nung first taught the cultivation of hemp in the 28th century B.C. Shen Nung is credited with developing the sciences of medicine from the curative power of plants. So highly regarded was Shen Nung that he was deified and today he is regarded as the Father of Chinese medicine. Shen Nung was also regarded as the Lord of fire. He sacrificed on T'ai Shan, a mountain of hoary antiquity.

A statement in the Pen-ts'ao Ching of some significance is that Cannabis "grows along rivers and valleys at T'ai-shan, but it is now common everywhere." Mount T'ai is in Shangtung Province, where the cultivation of the hemp plant is still intensive to this day. Whether or not this early attribution indicates the actual geographic origin of the cultivation of the Cannabis plant remains to be seen. (An Archeological and Historical Account of Cannabis in China by Hui-Lin Li)

A chines Taoist priest wrote in the fifth century B.C. that cannabis was used in combination with Ginseng to set forward time in order to reveal future events. It is recorded that the Taoist recommended the addition of cannabis to their incense burners in the 1st century A.D. and that the effects thus produced were highly regarded as a means of achieving immortality. In the early Chinese Taoist ritual the fumes and odors of incense burners were said to have produced a mystic exaltation and contribution to well-being.

Webster's New Riverside Dictionary defines marijuana: 1. Hemp 2. The dried flower clusters and leaves of the hemp plant, esp. when taken to induce euphoria. Euphoria is defined as a strong feeling of elation or well-being.

Like the practice of medicine around the world, early Chinese doctoring was based on the concept of demons. The only way to cure the sick was to drive out the demons. The early priest doctors used marijuana stalks into which snake-like figures were carved.

Standing over the body of the stricken patient, his cannabis stalk poised to strike, the priest pounded the bed and commanded the demon to be gone. The cannabis stalk with the snake carved on it was the forerunner to the sign of modern medicine (the staff with the entwined serpents.)

MARIJUANA IN JAPAN

Hemp was used in Ancient Japan in ceremonial purification rites and for driving away evil spirits. In Japan, Shinto priests used a gohei, a short stick with undyed hemp fibers (for purity) attached to one end. According to Shinto beliefs, evil and purity cannot exist alongside one another, and so by waving the gohei (purity) above someone's head the evil spirit inside him would be driven away. Clothes made of hemp were especially worn during formal and religious ceremonies because of hemp's traditional association with purity.

MARIJUANA IN ANCIENT IRAN

Ancient Iran was the source for the great Persian empire, Iran is located slightly to the northeast of the ancient kingdoms of Sumeria, Babylonia, and Assyria. According to Mircea Eliade, "Shamanistic ecstasy induced by hemp smoke was known in ancient Iran." Professor Eliade has suggested that Zoroaster, the Persian prophet, said to have written the Zend-Avesta, was a user of hemp.

In the Zend-Avesta hemp occupies the first place in a list of 10,000 medicinal plants. One of the few surviving books of the Zend-Avesta, called the Venidad, "The Law Against Demons", calls bhanga (marijuana) Zoroaster's "good narcotic", and tells of two mortals who were transported in soul to the heavens where, upon drinking from a cup of bhang, they had the highest mysteries revealed to them.

Professor Eliade has theorized that Zoroaster may have used hemp to bridge the metaphysical gap between heaven and earth.

MARIJUANA IN ANCIENT EGYPT

In the book, Plants of the Gods: Origin of Hallucinogenic Use by Richard E. Schultes and Albert Hofman, page 72, it is stated that the specimens of marijuana nearly 4,000 years old have turned up in an Egyptian site and that in ancient Thebes the plant was made into a drink.

MARIJUANA IN EUROPE

According to Nikolaas j. van der Merwe (Department of Archaeology, University of Cape Town, South Africa) the peasants of Europe have been using cannabis as medicine, ritual material, and to smoke or chew as far back as oral traditions go.

Marijuana was an integral part of the Scythian cult of the dead wherein homage was paid to the memory of their departed leaders. This use of cannabis was found in frozen Scythian tombs dated from 500 to 300 B.C. Along with the cannabis a miniature tripod-like tent over a copper censer was found in which the sacred plant was burned.

It is interesting to note that two extraordinary rugs were also found in the frozen Scythian tombs. One rug had a border frieze with a repeated composition of a horseman approaching the Great Goddess who holds the "Tree of Life" in one hand and raises the other hand in welcome.

MARIJUANA IN AFRICA

The African continent is probably the zone showing the widest prevalence of the hemp drug habit. When white men first went to Africa, marijuana was part of the native way of life. Africa was a continent of marijuana cultures where marijuana was an integral part of religious ceremony. The Africans were observed inhaling the smoke from piles of smoldering hemp. Some of these piles had been placed upon altars. The Africans also utilized pipes. The African Dagga (marijuana) cults believed that Holy Cannabis was brought to earth by the gods. (Throughout the ancient world Ethiopia was considered the home of the gods.)

In south central Africa, marijuana is held to be sacred and is connected with many religious and social customs. Marijuana is regarded by some sects as a magic plant possessing universal protection against all injury to life, and is symbolic of peace and friendship. Certain tribes consider hemp use a duty. The earliest evidence for cannabis smoking in Africa outside of Egypt comes from fourteenth century Ethiopia, where two ceramic smoking-pipe bowls containing traces of excavation. In many parts of East Africa, especially near Lake Victoria (the source for the Nile), hemp smoking and hashish snuffing cults still exist.

MARIJUANA IN THE NEW WORLD

According to Richard L. Lingeman in his book Drugs from A to Z, page 146, "Marijuana smoking was known by the Indians before Columbus." After the Spanish conquest in 1521 the Spaniards recorded that the Aztecs (Mayans) used marijuana.

The present day Cuna Indians of Panama use marijuana as a sacred herb and the Cora Indians of the Sierra Madre Occidental of Mexico smoke marijuana in this course of their sacred ceremonies.

In the Ritual Use of Cannabis Sativa L by William A Emboden, Jr., pages 229 and 231, is the following: "A particularly interesting account of a Tepehua (no relationship to "Tepecana") Indian ceremony with cannabis was published in 1963 by the Mexican ethnologist Roberto William Garcia of the University of Veracruz, northernmost branch of the Maya language family.

"In his account of Teehua religion and ritual, William Garcia (1963:215-21) describes in some detail a communal curing ceremony focused on a plant called santa rose, "The Herb Which Makes One Speak", which he identified botanically as Cannabis Sativa: According to Garcia it is worshipped as an earth deity and is thought to be alive and comparable to a piece of the heart of God."

MARIJUANA USE BY THE MOSLEMS

It is interesting to note that the use of hemp was not prohibited by Mohammed (570-632 A.D.) while the use of alcohol was. Moslems considered hemp as a "Holy Plant" and medieval Arab doctors considered hemp as a sacred medicine which they called among other names kannab. The Sufis (a Moslem sect) originating in 8th century Persia used hashish as a means of stimulating mystical consciousness and appreciation of the nature of Allah. Eating hashish to the Sufis was "an act of worship". They maintained that hashish gave them otherwise unattainable insights into themselves, deeper understanding and that it made them feel witty. They also claimed that it gave happiness, reduced anxiety, reduced worry, and increased music appreciation.

According to one Arab legend Haydar, the Persian founder of the religious order of Sufi came across the cannabis plant while wandering in the Persian mountains. Usually a reserved and silent man, when he returned to his monastery after eating some cannabis leaves, his disciples were amazed at how talkative and animated (full of spirit) he seemed. After cajoling Haydar into telling them what he had done to make him feel so happy, his disciples went out into the mountains and tried the cannabis themselves. So it was, according to the legend, that the Sufis came to know the pleasures of hashish. (Taken from the Introduction to A Comprehensive Guide to Cannabis Literature by Earnest Abel.)

SUMMARY

Due to the prosecution of God's church from the beginning of the Christian era and due to the persecution against marijuana the true understanding of the Eucharist has remained hidden from Christendom and the world, only to be revealed in these times, the culmination of all human history.

We of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church declare marijuana for the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, and for the resurrection of mankind. The fruits of the mystery are remembrance of the passions and death of Christ, propitiation for sins, defense against temptation, and the indwelling of Christ in the faithful.

Preparations for communion consist of confession of sins, fasting from sin, and reconciliation with all mankind. As such the participant in the Eucharist will be in a condition in which prayer and meditation are easy and fruitful. He will find his emotion purified and stimulated, his spirituality quickened and his heart filled with love.

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We hope you enjoyed this pamphlet. If you have any questions or comments, we would like to see them. Send them to the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church, P.O. Box 1161, Minneola, FL 34755-1161.

We of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church decided to publish this pamphlet in order to give the public an opportunity to study the church and its doctrine; not from inflated and misleading media but from historical and Biblical reference. The Church has received extensive publicity as "60 Minutes" has done a segment; Life, Omni, Science, Rolling Stone, and High Times magazines have all done articles, countless newspaper articles have been written, and various brothers have been on radio and TV talk shows around the country.

We of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church revere ganja (marijuana) as our "holy" Eucharist and "spiritual intensifier" with Biblical, historical and divine associations for its use.

Ganja is the mystical body and blood of "Jesus" -- the burnt offering made by fire -- which allows a member to see and know the "living God", or the "God in man".